

Chairman Sonju, members of the Transportation House Committee,

I'm Ron Gompertz of Bozeman, and I'm here to voice my support for SB 185.

While a few thousand Montanans driving electric cars are not going to eliminate America's dependence on foreign oil, or reduce "greenhouse gas emissions" by much, every little bit helps and it's an important step in the right direction. Between hydro, wind, solar and coal, Montana generate lots more electricity than crude oil. SB185 puts Montana in a leadership role for energy independence.

I bought my first electric car last summer, and have been driving it around Bozeman ever since. With a set of snow tires mounted, my electric car gets me back and forth to work throughout the year. It's engine never needs warming up, the electric heater starts working right away. I'll never have to go to a gas station, have a tune up, get an oil change, or fix a loose exhaust pipe.

In January, I received my Montana car dealer's license and started selling electric cars in Bozeman. These cars are affordable, starting at under \$10,000 and make a great second car for errand running around town.

Next week, I'm delivering an electric car to Rick Jones, a high school science teacher in Billings. Rick will be using his car for commuting. He hopes SB 185 passes, because he wants his teenage son to drive one too. Billings just passed a safety law intended to protect young drivers, and Rick thought an electric car was just the thing to keep his son out of trouble.

Yesterday, an older couple came into my store. They own a ranch and for years have gotten their electricity from solar panels. As gas prices are heading back to \$3 again, they wanted to buy an electric car to run errands, but were disappointed to find they not allowed to go faster than 25. I told them about SB 185 and they said to tell you they hope it passes.

People always ask me why electric cars are not allowed to go faster than 25 in Montana when motorcyclist can ride at the speed limit without a helmet, tiny mopeds can go 30, the owner of a '67 mustang isn't required to have seatbelts, and snowmobiles can legally drive on snow covered public streets at the speed limit when other motor vehicle use is considered impractical.

Electric cars are not by nature slow.

Just go to the National Electric Drag Racing Association website to see cars that do the 1/4 mile in 8 seconds. Tesla Motors, makes an electric sports car that does 0-60 in 4 seconds, but costs \$100,000.

Right now I can only drive my electric car at 25 miles per hour. 90% of Bozeman streets are rated at 25 miles per hour, with another 9% at 35 miles per hour. If I could drive my electric car at 35 miles per hour, I would not longer hold up traffic. If electric cars were allowed to drive 35, many more people would find them practical for short trips and commutes... which is how people use their cars most of the time anyway.

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